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ABSTRACT

This pack challenges ignorance about racial diversity in England by encouraging activities that shed light on the recent past and the society in which young people in Britain live. The exercises in this book invite young people to explore ethnic and cultural diversity in Britain. They are designed to show that ethnic diversity is good and enriching, that it has been around for a long time, and that it contributes to a society that is always changing and developing. Activities are: (1) "Being British"; (2) "Dominant Cultures"; (3) "Meet Your Twin"; (4) "Get It Taped"; (5) "Pushes and Pulls"; (6) "Sorted!"; (7) "Host a Poster"; (8) "Sweetshops and Sweatshops"; (8) "Rap It Up and Start Again"; (9) "Root Mapping"; and (10) "Resources and Where To Go Next." (SLD)

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ED 429 156

ROOTS OF THE FUTURE

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ROOTS OF THE FUTURE

AN EDUCATION PACK FOR EXPLORING ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN BRITAIN

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THE COMPANION PUBLICATION TO THIS PACK IS
ROOTS OF THE FUTURE: ETHIC DIVERSITY IN THE MAKING OF BRITAIN,
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INTRODUCTION

This pack is a positive pack. It invites young people and those who work with them to explore, celebrate and take pride in Britain's ethnic diversity. But its positiveness must never encourage us to forget the basic truth that underlies it: that racism in its different forms – from outright violence, murder and intimidation, to selective treatment on racial grounds – is a fact of life in Britain. Racism – the belief that races and ethnic groups have distinctive cultural characteristics making some races inherently superior to others – has no basis in fact. Abusive or aggressive behaviour towards other races on the grounds of such a belief is one of the most pernicious ills of the times. Hatred and fear of foreigners, together with racist thinking, can and does cause deep social unrest, not the ordinary movement of people across the world. Many Black and Asian people face a constant battle against racist acts, attitudes and policies. Their lives are shaped by what is one of the most damaging and far reaching social evils in our society.

These truths – and the urgent and powerful need to act on them – are the driving force behind this collection of exercises and activities. But the focus of the pack is decidedly different. The actual content of *Roots of the Future* addresses one of the principal causes of racism: ignorance. The pack challenges ignorance by encouraging activities that will shed light on the recent past and on the society that young people in Britain grow up in.

Roots of the Future is a forward looking pack. In parts it invites young people to explore the past (understanding history is vital to understanding society), but the main thrust is to look at the future – a future where a 'them and us' analysis of ethnic diversity has no place, because it is exposed as baseless, divisive and fraudulent.

The exercises invite young people to explore ethnic and cultural diversity in Britain. They are designed to show that ethnic diversity:

- is good and enriching;
- has been around for a very long time; and
- contributes to a society that is always changing and developing.

The specific sort of ignorance that this pack seeks to address is the view, widely held by many, that Britain is basically a homogenous society of one racial type (white northern Europeans) and that post-war immigration introduced ethnic minorities which put pressure on the welfare state, aggravated racial tension and promoted social unrest in what was otherwise a stable, harmonious and static society.

This view is wrong. Wrong in every single respect. Factually wrong, provably wrong and wrong, wickedly wrong, in all the thoughts, conclusions and actions that stem from it. Despite its wrongness, this view is currently being taught to children and young people throughout Britain. That is a startling way to express it but, as the Commission for Racial Equality video contained in this pack shows, babies are not racist. They learn to be racist. As they grow, they acquire racist habits or thoughts as simply as they acquire other skills and attributes, by listening, observing and copying others.

The exercises in this pack encourage young people to be aware of the constant movement of people and the rich variety of experience that goes in to modern society. It challenges racism by celebrating the lifestyles and contributions of all groups of people.

BEING BRITISH

PURPOSE

The card exercise below is intended to prompt and deepen discussion about the ethnic make-up of Britain. Discussion, which may have started from a racist remark, or followed on from showing the videos accompanying this pack, should centre on the key theme of this exercise – what does 'being British' mean? And can we ever truthfully talk about 'us' and 'them'?

BEFORE YOU START

You will need to photocopy the sheets on pages 6–21 and cut each one up into the cards indicated.

WHAT TO DO

The exercise consists of two sets of 16 cards, one set with the names of 16 groups of people who have come to Britain over time and the other set with 16 descriptions and various facts about these people. Give each participant one card, either a name card or a descriptions card, making sure that if all the cards are not used matching pairs of cards are distributed.

Explain to participants that they either have a name card or a descriptions card and the idea of the exercise is for participants to pair up with the person whom they think has the matching card to their name or description. Allow 10 to 15 minutes for participants to wander around and find out who has their matching card. Once participants have found their matching pair they sit down in their pair until all cards are finally matched.

Come together as a whole group and ask each participant to read out their card in turn and establish whether or not the pair has been correctly matched. Ask the rest of the

group for guidance if the pair is wrongly matched.

Once all the cards have been discussed, ask the group for feedback:

- How easy was it to match up the pairs?
- Did anything on the cards surprise them? If so, what?
- Did they disagree with anything on the cards? If so, what?

Having done this exercise, ask the young people to define 'being British'. What does it mean? Does it mean how long your family has been here, or how far back you can trace your family? Does it mean what colour or religion you are? If it's true that Britain has always been made up of immigrants who have come here and their descendants, who is really British and who is not? Isn't it better to simply say that being British really means anyone who lives here, whatever their race or religion or belief, who feels themselves to be British? On what basis or right does anyone else make any other judgment?

NOTES

It is quite possible that, in the course of this exercise, young people will express racist views which they either hold themselves or have heard from others. It is important that the facilitator makes clear their disagreement with these views but at the same time encourages the young person to put their point of view forward. Counter arguments and facts can then be put by the facilitator and other young people. The aim of this exercise is to explore feelings about race and ethnicity and help young people move forward towards confidence in and support for a multi-cultural society, so it is important that they are given the chance to have issues debated openly and honestly, rather than simply 'squashed'.

At some point in the discussion on defining 'being British', it is worth pointing out that 'Native British' was not

included as a category in the exercise, because such a group cannot really be identified. There were people in what is now Britain before the Celts (say before 1000 BC), although we don't know their names. Archaeological evidence shows that they too were immigrants from mainland Europe.

The whole exercise and discussion shows that the idea of 'us' and 'them' in Britain, of sending 'them' back home is laughable. How do you possibly identify 'us', the real British? Who is 'them' and where would 'they' be sent back to? Countries of origin where their ancestors have not lived for hundreds of years? Apart from being hugely unfair, and having a detrimental effect on every aspect of British life, sending 'them' back would mean our royal family returning to Germany and Greece, world boxing champion Naseem Hamed returning to the Yemen, and hundreds of our leading doctors and scientists returning to countries all over the world. We are all 'us', we are all 'them'.

AFRICAN-CARIBBEANS

- They are from a range of islands.
- Many fought for the allies during World War II, including 300 as air crew and 5,500 as RAF ground crew.
- After World War II London Transport helped thousands of them to come to England to fill jobs in transport.
- The first group of Jamaicans to arrive after the war came on the ship Empire Windrush in 1948.
- While they are well known for their contributions to sport (Judy Simpson, Ian Wright) and music (Goldie, Gabrielle) many are making successful careers in a range of other fields including business, journalism and law.

ANGLES, SAXONS AND JUTES

- Sometimes thought of as the 'native' people of Britain. In fact they were from the regions of northern Germany, the Netherlands and southern Denmark and arrived in the 5th and 6th centuries.
- Fought with Vikings and pushed the Celts into the north and west of the country.
- Defeated in 1066 by the Normans.
- Their language is the basis of modern day English: the words good, help, heaven, ship and give are derived from them.

BANGLADESHIS

- Islam is the predominant religion of this group.
- Their country of origin was formally known as East Pakistan.
- Many came in the 1960s and 1970s.
- Half the population is based in the borough of Tower Hamlets in the East End of London.
- The main languages spoken are Bengali, English and Sylheti.
- They have excelled in the catering trade running many of Britain's 'Indian' restaurants.

CELTS

- European groups of people who migrated to Britain until the 1st century BC.
- Romans called them Gauls.
- In Britain they were driven back by invading Angles and Saxons, and their culture centred on Scotland, Wales and the southwest of England.
- Welsh and Gaelic are languages that were derived from them.

CHINESE

- Many work in the hotel and catering trade.
- Their restaurants have become a key feature of the British high streets.
- The majority in Britain originate from Hong Kong and came in the 1950s and 1960s.
- Languages include English, Cantonese, Hakka and Mandarin.
- Religious beliefs include Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism and Christianity.

EAST AFRICAN ASIANS

- Many came as refugees following their expulsion from Uganda, Kenya and Malawi in the late 1960s and early 1970s.
- They included many professionals, business people and civil servants who brought their skills to Britain.
- Many settled in Leicester where they now provide 8 per cent of all jobs in the city.

GYPSIES

- Best known of the Traveller people in Britain.
- They represent a range of nomadic peoples, which includes Romanies, who came from India to Europe in the 14th century.
- There are between seven and nine million of them across Europe.
- They are often the subject of persecution and Hitler ordered their mass murder during the period of Nazi rule in Germany.
- The many different peoples have a rich and varied culture. In Spain they are famous for flamenco music and dancing; in Britain they are respected for their knowledge of horses.

INDIANS

- Nearly 1.5 million from this sub-continent fought in the British army during World War I, about 40,000 died. During World War II, 2.5 million were enrolled in all the services, the largest volunteer army in history.
- People from this country came to England over centuries starting from the time when it was a colony, with larger numbers arriving in response to labour shortages in the 1950s and 1960s.
- The people from the country include Gujaratis, Punjabi Sikhs and Goans, and they have many religions that include Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Buddhism.
- Famous for their food, curry first appeared on the menus in Britain in 1773.
- Well known members of the community include musician Apache Indian, industrialist Lord Paul and actor Deepak Verma (Sanjay in *Eastenders*).

IRISH

- The largest ethnic minority group in Britain.
- Arrived in large numbers in the 19th century and built many of the roads, railways and canals of Britain (many came to undertake heavy manual work that could not or would not be done by others).
- By 1900 they made up 15 per cent of British army regiments.
- While many experience discrimination in Britain they are also famous for contributing to its cultural life: members of the community include writer Oscar Wilde, Thomas Barnado (who started the charity Barnados), footballer George Best and the band Boyzone.

ITALIANS

- Many came to Britain to fill labour shortages.
- The food of this country has made a major impact and one of the first restaurants Terroni and Sons was established in 1890.
- The Body Shop, one of Britain's most successful companies, is owned by Anita Roddick, daughter of immigrants from this country.
- The champion jockey Frankie Dettori originates from this country.

JEWS

- Settled in Britain from the 11th century after being offered royal protection from the Normans, though they were frequently persecuted and expelled.
- They were forbidden by the church to own land, employ Christians or to carry arms.
- They founded the first banking, financial and insurance services in Britain.
- They were not allowed to enter Parliament until 1858.
- Between 1870 and 1914 about 120,000 came from Russia and Poland escaping savage persecution to settle in London's East End, Leeds and Manchester.
- Have contributed widely to the social, economic and political life of Britain, founding companies such as Marks & Spencer.
- Well known members of the community include the comedian Ben Elton, actress Maureen Lipman and TV presenter Jonathan Ross.

NORMANS

- Descended from Vikings who settled in Northern France during the 9th and 10th centuries.
- In 1066 the Duke of Normandy and his army defeated the Anglo-Saxons.
- Their conquest was followed by a resettlement programme in which large numbers of them who were French speaking came to Britain and became the ruling class of England.
- Introduced new forms of justice such as the jury system.
- Modern day English words derived from them include law, history, school and romance.

PAKISTANIS

- Majority came to Britain in the 1950s and 1960s.
- Islam is the predominant religion of this group.
- Many came in response to recruitment drives to fill vacancies caused by the economic regeneration after World War II.
- Many of the jobs were badly paid and in the national health service, textiles, engineering and transport.
- Large communities are in Bradford, Slough, Birmingham and Burnley.
- The main languages spoken are English, Urdu and Mirpuri.
- Well known members of the community include Shami Ahmed who owns Joe Bloggs clothes company, cricketer Imran Khan and rugby league star Ikram Butt.

ROMANS

- Invaded Britain in 55 BC.
- The name Britain was derived from Welsh by them. They called the island Britannia which became an imperial province of their empire.
- The tribes in Britain were influenced by many aspects of their civilisation – legal and political systems, architecture and engineering.
- A number of soldiers in their army were African and were the earliest known African settlers in Britain.
- Cities such as Bath and Exeter were founded by them.
- Left Britain in the 5th century as their empire began to collapse.

VIKINGS

- They arrived in Britain from 800 AD to 1100 AD from Scandinavia and many settled over time.
- As well as invaders, they were also traders who bought knowledge and expertise on arts and crafts, marine technology, exploration and trading skills.
- They made the journey to North America about 500 years before the 'discovery' by Christopher Columbus.

WEST AFRICANS

- Some had arrived in Britain during Roman times but many came in the 17th and 18th centuries as the British involvement in slaves from this region flourished.
- Many became resident in the cities partly built on the profits of slavery, particularly Liverpool and Bristol.
- By 1787 many of them formed part of the Black population in London that numbered 20,000.
- Born in Nigeria in 1745, brought to England as a slave in 1757, bought his freedom in 1766, autobiography 1789.
- Today well known personalities include broadcaster Zeinab Badawi, Paul Boateng MP and DJ Lisa I'Anson.

DOMINANT CULTURES

PURPOSE

To explore what is meant by culture. To air and to challenge the idea that Britain has, or once had, a single identifiable 'traditional way of life' that has been or can be threatened by outside influences.

BEFORE YOU START

You will need some magazines and newspapers, scissors, drawing pins or bluetack for attaching cuttings to the wall, paper for drawing on and three sheets of paper with headings written on: Totally British Culture – shared by most if not all; Part of British Culture – though not shared by most; and Not At All British Culture – unfamiliar and strange to most British people. For the follow-up exercise (see Variations and Developments) you will need copies of the table entitled Cultural Domination? on page 25.

WHAT TO DO

Bring in some magazines and newspapers and encourage the group to do the same. Talk about what we mean by a country's 'culture' – in broad terms 'the way of life' that can cover habits, actions, goods we own, leisure activities, food, music and so on. It can be hard to get this kind of idea across – so spend some time discussing it and talking about what you mean by reference to other cultures.

Then start cutting or tearing bits out of the magazines. Take things which show or suggest a cultural activity. Be broad: golf, buying a lottery ticket, Burger King, posh dinner parties. Don't forget items in the paper itself – a crossword might be a cultural activity. Also use the pictures you select to suggest others – you might not get a picture of pigeon racing,

a bar mitzvah, yoga classes, bhangra or bingo. You might ask why not. If these activities are known to the group, write or draw them quickly on a piece of paper and add them to the pile of cut-outs.

When you have a good pile, start pinning them on a wall (you may need a lot of space). Put each one into one of three clearly marked categories:

- totally British culture – shared by most if not all;
- part of British culture – though not shared by most;
- not at all British culture – unfamiliar and strange to most British people.

The results can be very interesting – and there are a lot of questions to be asked. For one, what kinds of activities do those people who fear 'cultural domination' have in mind? If they mean to suggest our traditional way of life is opera, going to the parish church for evensong and playing cricket, then they are talking about things that only ever affected a small number of people. How does class relate to cultural activities? Is opera just Italian music-hall from two hundred years ago?

VARIATIONS AND DEVELOPMENTS

If there are any residual doubts about cultural domination, you could copy the table on page 25 from the pack and get the group to complete it. This should make it clear whose culture is most in danger of being swamped.

NOTES

It is necessary to explore culture, because overt racists, and some prominent politicians who ought to know better, fan the flames of latent xenophobia by references to cultural domination.

These fears are not new. But they only really make sense for a nation that has been overtaken, oppressed or scattered by a dominant foreign power. It has happened throughout history – from the Jewish people in Biblical times

to minority groups in present day states – where people have feared for and tried to protect what they see as distinctly their identity.

It is frankly absurd to think that a small percentage of immigrants could somehow mesmerise, against its will, a majority population, forcing it to abandon its styles, habits, preferences and traditions in matters such as music, literature, art, film, theatre, food, religion, beliefs and ways of life, and adapt new and alien ones.

The idea is ludicrous. Yet it persists, because people do not think straight and are willing to be persuaded by vague and half-baked fears.

Once you have completed the exercise and had plenty of discussion, you may find that young people are confused about what is British culture. They may feel that it is complex and evershifting. This is inevitable – the very word culture comes from the verb to grow. And that means it is always adapting and moving on. But that is all a sign of health, vitality and strength.

CULTURAL DOMINATION?

	Majority ethnic group	Minority ethnic group
Members are sometimes challenged in schools for wearing their traditional dress		
May have to adopt other cultures' styles and habits if they want top jobs and powerful posts		
Do not have their religious holidays as public holidays		
Are mocked and teased about their beliefs or habits on TV and in popular newspapers		
Are victims of racial attacks, abuse and violence		

MEET YOUR TWIN

PURPOSE

To explore the lives of people, especially young people, in the town that is officially twinned with your town. To see what is different about growing up in different places – and what is the same.

WHAT TO DO

Precisely what you do will depend on the time commitment you have, the interest of the young people, the existing arrangements of your town twinning committee, and a hundred and one other things. So this section can merely offer basic advice and good principles to follow. Whatever you do:

- ensure that your group is made up of all the ethnic groups in your area;
- involve young people in every aspect of the project – from initial planning to evaluation and follow-up; and
- celebrate diversity but always dig deep enough to understand differences and to establish underlying similarities: never let the exploration stop at the 'don't they have some funny ways of doing things' stage.

And remember:

- You do not have to travel, or host a visit, to get value from contact with a twin. Send letters, videotapes, audio-cassettes about your lives, interests and aspirations.
- Leave your preconceptions behind. One Scottish group that visited New Zealand reported: 'Maori culture is similar to our own ... in terms of pride in their heritage and language. We all felt we could relate easily to each other.'

VARIATIONS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Many towns and cities have one or more officially twinned towns. If yours doesn't, or for some reason you do not want to work through the official channels, you could consider your own arrangements. Obviously this would fall a long way short of a formal twinning set-up, but if the group is keen there is nothing to stop you making a link with another youth group in another area. Rural-urban exchanges have worked well – sometimes as part of explicitly anti-racist youth work.

NOTES

Once you have talked through your basic idea with the group, there will be a number of groups you might like to contact. Obviously, your town twinning committee is one – get its details from the local council, or from your library which is bound to have information on file.

Other sources of good advice are the Youth Exchange Centre, British Council, 10 Spring Gardens, London SW1A 2BN, and the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council, 7 Lion Yard, Tremadoc Road, London SW4 7NQ.

GET IT TAPED

PURPOSE

To have fun, using video to record young people's views and discoveries about ethnic diversity in Britain.

BEFORE YOU START

The video produced by the Commission for Racial Equality that accompanies this pack should spark off plenty of ideas – both for discussion and creative ideas to follow in making the group's own video.

WHAT TO DO

If you have your own or access to video equipment – go for it. Encourage young people to look around their local area, gather opinions from wherever they can and record their own video statement. It can be comic, convey a message, tell a story, focus on an individual or an area – whatever they want. Encourage them to be upbeat and celebratory. And if they expect anyone to watch it afterwards, it had better be entertaining.

VARIATIONS AND DEVELOPMENTS

If you do not have access to or your own video equipment, do not despair. This can be a source of strength, as you can work in partnership with someone else who does. Or, if your idea is good enough, you may get a local community arts or resource group to make the video to young people's direction.

PUSHES AND PULLS

PURPOSE

To discover some of the reasons why people left one country to come to Britain – and why some people leave Britain to go elsewhere. To dispel some of the common tabloid myths about welfare scroungers and bogus asylum-seekers.

BEFORE YOU START

You will need to photocopy the sheets entitled I left my country because... and I came to Britain because ... on pages 32–33. Make enough copies for everyone in the group (and some spares).

WHAT TO DO

This exercise is a piece of detective work. It requires some digging, some asking and some thinking. Regard it as an exercise to do over a few weeks, rather than as a simple one-off discussion topic. Ideally there are three phases to the exercise, each of which will extend understanding of the influences and make-up of Britain and the local area. The idea is to use the sheets to identify the motivations behind migration.

Start with general types of people, to get discussion going and find out how aware young people are of recent politics:

- A couple from Bosnia in ex-Yugoslavia, he a Serb, she a Croat, and their children.
- A family from Jamaica who came in response to British Government offers of jobs and homes.
- An Asian family who worked as doctors in east Africa, until expelled by Idi Amin.
- A Pole who came in 1945 after fighting against Germany under British command.

As a group work through the characters, devoting a sheet

to each 'person' and ticking as many boxes as seem appropriate for both push and pull factors. Add any other reasons you come up with. You will need to speculate and make assumptions – which is fine but make sure that your guesses have a reasonable basis in facts. You may need to fill in gaps in young people's knowledge (and your own). But do not be afraid of saying you do not know – though do resolve to find out more. You will find the companion book *Roots of the Future: ethnic diversity in the making of Britain* an excellent starting point.

Then move on to looking at Britons that everyone knows. Why did they, or their parents, leave their country and come to Britain? Devise your own list of people known to your group – or use the following:

- Newsreader Moira Stewart
- Model Naomi Campbell
- Radio One DJ Lisa I'Anson
- Violinist Yehudi Menuhin
- Trade union leader Bill Morris
- Body Shop founder Anita Roddick
- MP Diane Abbott
- Comedian Lenny Henry
- Former politician Michael Portillo
- Athlete Linford Christie
- Civil engineer Alfred McAlpine

Of course, finding out the background of these people may not be easy. And there may be an initial puzzled reaction – 'they are British'. Precisely.

Extend the exercise even further by interviewing real people from your neighbourhood. Young people in your group may know of friends and relatives who would be happy to be interviewed about their experiences of arriving in Britain. If not, you could make formal contact with a group – there may be a community group or society locally made up of immigrants and their descendants.

VARIATIONS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Britain is also a country that people emigrate from. In fact, nearly every year since the 1960s more people have left Britain than arrived in it. Many young people have relatives who left Britain to make a new life in countries such as New Zealand, Canada, Australia, South Africa, Hong Kong and the USA. It would be interesting to explore the pushes and pulls of their immigration decisions. For further work you could explore your local area in more depth, seeing what its immigration pattern has been. Or you may find the group interested in the recent history or politics of a country. Follow it up.

NOTES

The idea is to explore the reasons that motivate people into leaving a country (the pushes) and the reasons they come to a particular one (the pulls). Of course, individual reasons are complex, multi-faceted and sometimes personal. Nonetheless they often fall into identifiable patterns – and those patterns are far more real, recognisable and plausible than the absurd stereotyping as scroungers and dole-blaggers that the popular press tries to fabricate.

One point to make forcefully is that people do not leave their homelands, uproot themselves from their familiar culture and lifestyles and come to a wet, miserable overcrowded island like Britain to live a life of idleness and luxury on the pittance that is Income Support. It does not make sense. Nor, however much certain politicians might like the phrase, does it make sense to try to pass yourself off as a 'bogus' asylum seeker. Immigrants tend not to be bogus anything. They do have real reasons for what they do – often being choices that anyone would make in the same circumstances.

It should also become clear that immigrants are more likely to bring skills and qualifications that are needed, do the jobs that are unpopular, create businesses and work.

PUSHES AND PULLS

I left my country because ...

There was no work

The government became hostile to us and told us to leave

We were escaping persecution

We were escaping famine

I wanted to start a new life, new excitement

I was ambitious, and wanted to find new outlets

My parents left – so I had to

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PUSHES AND PULLS

I came to Britain because ...

It had a reputation as a country where hard work was rewarded

The British government invited me – paid my airfare and made it easy

I already had friends and family living here

I had a British passport

I fought for Britain during the war – lots of my friends died that way

Britain needs the skills I have got

I knew there was work – dirty, heavy work – that no-one else wanted to do

It was a busy airport – Heathrow was the first flight I could get

SORTED!

PURPOSE

To see the bewildering number and variety of cultures that are accepted as part of everyday life in Britain. To begin to trace the development and origins of some that attract young people's interest.

BEFORE YOU START

You will need a large sheet of paper to write down ideas brainstormed.

WHAT TO DO

This activity starts as a brainstorm, followed by a discussion and sorting exercise. It can then lead to more in-depth work following up areas that have struck participants as of particular interest.

For the brainstorm, simply write the words **Choices in Britain** at the top of a large sheet of paper. Choose a topic – either food and drink or music and dance – and write the chosen topic heading at the top of the paper. Encourage young people to shout out all the different styles, types and varieties they know of that are currently available in Britain. Encourage as much detail as you can – accept 'Indian food', but also try to get more specific calls – balti, tandoori, moghlai ... Similarly with music and dance, include all calls – hip hop, house, techno, rap, salsa, bhangra, jazz, fusion ...

When you have finished, try sorting them. The group might be tempted to make distinction between 'British' and 'foreign' food or influences. Fine. Let them try. But object if anyone wants to include a cup of tea as British – the stuff will not grow here and has been imported only since the middle of the 17th century. (The Chinese, by contrast, were drinking

it around 350 BC.) Likewise, fish and chips might seem traditional. But the spud that makes it all possible was an import of the Elizabethan age – by which time the Peruvians had been growing (and storing them by freezing and drying) for thousands of years. The country's first fish and chips are thought to have been sold from a shop in Lancashire in 1870. But by then, curry had appeared on a London cafe menu and in recipe books. So which is traditional?

Such difficulties of identifying Britishness appear also in music and dance. Trace the origins and influences and it becomes clear that even such a labelled home-grown sound as Britpop has its roots in African and American rhythms and styles. What is more British than the song England fans sing at international games? Well, since *Swing Low Sweet Chariot* started life as a 'Negro spiritual', the question is a complex one.

The point is not to suggest that Britain does not have any food, culture and music of its own. Of course it does. Fish and chips are British. So are balti take-aways, pizzas and chop suey. The fact that they have some of their roots in other countries does not diminish their Britishness. Rather it reinforces the reality that Britain is a fluid, everchanging and evolving society. Throughout its history Britain has been enriched by associations with other cultures; it constantly swaps, borrows and develops from other influences. That process has been going on for centuries. And is continuing now – to the benefit of us all.

VARIATIONS AND DEVELOPMENTS

If your group gets really interested (or argumentative) about the origins of a style in food, dance or music, try to follow it back as far as you can. Encyclopaedias and specialist reference books in the local reference library should give you a start. There may be a relevant national body. Write and ask for

more information.

Look as well, if you are able to, at the exports Britain has made. Because, of course, we do not only import ideas and styles. Find out what North Americans mean by English muffins. What about the hotel in Singapore that serves a delicacy called haggis? Which countries of the world play cricket – and why?

Ask any recent immigrants or people who have lived abroad what the image of Britishness is abroad. How do other people view British culture? What do they borrow? Or re-import?

The companion book to this pack – *Roots of the Future: ethnic diversity in the making of Britain* – is a good source of ideas, facts and stimulation.

HOST A POSTER

PURPOSE

To work together as a group to devise agreed messages about Britain's ethnic diversity. To use arts and craft skills to portray those messages in a tangible form, as a poster or mural.

BEFORE YOU START

You will need enough large sheets of paper for everyone to make their own poster or, if working in groups, enough paper for each group. You might also like to have colouring pens and other materials handy that would be useful for producing a poster or mural.

WHAT TO DO

Posters work best when their message is clear and succinct. They are also good if they are striking and even surprising, rather than simply worthy and predictable. So this exercise is best done, not as an opener, but at a time when the group has spent some time working together and has begun to develop its views and opinions.

Either split into smaller groups, perhaps pairs, for the poster – or stay in a larger group if you are planning a larger mural.

Toss out some ideas to get the group's creativity flowing. Provocative questions (not as poster ideas, but as stimulation and triggers) might help. Such as:

- What would a mono-ethnic society be like?
- What are the strengths of ethnic diversity?
- Who benefits from racism and xenophobia?
- What would happen if the royal family, leading politicians and all other 'foreigners' were obliged to leave the country. Where would you prefer to be?

- What would this country be like if it were not for the contributions of ethnic minorities over the decades and centuries?
- What does it feel like to be regarded by some as a foreigner in your own country?

NOTES

The more the group knows about the reality of ethnic minority contributions to the life of Britain, the more confidently and enthusiastically they will be able to respond.

SWEETSHOPS AND SWEATSHOPS

PURPOSE

To appreciate the major contribution made to the economic life of Britain by people from ethnic minority groups and to gain an understanding of the barriers and blocks that affect their chances in the labour market.

BEFORE YOU START

You will need to photocopy and cut up the quiz cards from pages 41–45 as indicated.

WHAT TO DO

Organise the group for a quiz-type competition, either individually or as teams, as suits the group. Play competitively by all means – but the quiz is light-hearted and intended to raise discussion points as much as anything else. Note anything that seems unexpected or surprising, and mark it down to follow up.

VARIATIONS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Use the quiz as a springboard for delving into the economic life of your area. What industries are prominent? How have they changed over recent years? What migration patterns to or from the area are associated with the industry?

NOTES

It is wrong to stereotype all Jewish immigrants to Britain as tailors and moneylenders, all Asians as running corner shops, all Irish as construction workers and all Jamaicans and Barbadians as working for London Transport.

In reality, the jobs, professions and contributions made by ethnic minorities are wide and various: hairdressers,

journalists, newsreaders, politicians, actors, architects, advertising executives, musicians, civil servants, teachers, engineers ... That should never be forgotten.

But neither should it be forgotten that there are pressures that pull people in certain directions and barriers that block off other routes. When people arrive in a new country they need to make a living. Racism and prejudice can make getting well-paid jobs difficult – hence the tendency towards self-employment, poorly paid unattractive work and jobs where there is a shortage of skilled workers.

There are no Asian chief constables in the country (although there is one Asian assistant chief constable) and there are quite a few Asian self-employed shopkeepers. It is worth making the point that this has nothing to do with ability, temperament or aptitude. It has a lot to do with opportunity and discrimination.

QUESTION 1

Many British motorways, bridges and big building jobs (as well as the digging of the canals and building railways last century) was carried out by workers from Ireland. Is this because:

a) Irish people are big and muscly and ideally suited to heavy manual work?

b) Poverty and famine in Ireland meant that they were willing to take exhausting, menial, casual, poorly paid work that many English people would refuse?

c) All the big civil engineering companies were Irish-owned?

ANSWER 1

The answer is **B**

Irish people are not bigger than anyone else. And while it is true today that many of the building companies, such as McAlpine and Murphy's, are Irish, that is a result not a cause of Irish concentration on construction.

QUESTION 2

The clothing industry uses piece workers – people often working from home, or in poor conditions in employers' premises – paid just a few pence for producing each garment. Do most of these workers tend to be:

a) Asian women in the English Midlands, north and certain London boroughs?

b) Traditional cockney lads from London's East End?

c) Welsh ex-miners who turned to the new trade when their pits closed?

ANSWER 2

The answer is **A**

The rates of pay are set in competition with cheap imports, from so-called sweatshops in Third World countries, which have been made by poorly paid workers, mainly women, under appalling conditions.

QUESTION 3

Compared with the working population overall, are workers from ethnic minorities:

a) More likely to be employed in well-paid jobs?

b) More likely to be self-employed and employing others?

c) More likely to be living from unearned income, stocks and shares?

ANSWER 3

The answer is **B**

For instance, according to the 1991 census, 25 per cent of working Indian men, 27 per cent of working Pakistani men and 33 per cent of working Chinese men in Britain were self-employed – compared with 18 per cent of the overall working population. About 20 per cent of Chinese self-employed men created jobs for other people compared with 6 per cent of self-employed men overall.

QUESTION 4

What is the connection between the Body Shop, Joe Bloggs, Amstrad and Patak's sauces?

a) They are all owned by the giant transnational company Unilever.

b) Their products are all available at your local corner shop.

c) They are all immensely successful companies started in Britain by entrepreneurs from ethnic minorities.

ANSWER 4

The answer is **C**

The companies were started by Anita Roddick, Shami Ahmed, Alan Sugar and Kirit and Meena Patak.

QUESTION 5

Which of the following occupational groups has the lowest representation of ethnic minority workers?

a) The legal system – lawyers and judges.

b) The public transport system – drivers and conductors.

c) The NHS – nurses and doctors.

d) The armed forces.

e) National politics.

ANSWER 5

The answer is **A**

There are ethnic minority barristers and lawyers. And there are now a handful of 'other than white' circuit judges. But much higher proportions of the staff of the health service and London Transport are ethnic minorities. Many were invited to Britain because of those skills – and the services would not run without them. The armed forces have 1.4 per cent and, prior to the 1997 General Election, national politics had 0.9 per cent.

RAP IT UP AND START AGAIN

PURPOSE

To have fun, create a sound, and get a message across with music.

WHAT TO DO

Invite the group to devise songs or raps that sum up what they want to say to others about multi-ethnic Britain. You can do this at any point. Record them, perform them, with whatever degree of sophistication in musical backing the young people want or are prepared to provide.

VARIATIONS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Obviously, once you are on the subject of music, you have a lot of scope for exploring multi-ethnic Britain. Diverse musical styles are part of British society. The group may also know of songs that deal directly with immigration and being Black or Asian in Britain. Bring them in and explore them together. Make a compilation tape of sounds that reflect British music in full.

ROOT MAPPING

PURPOSE

To explore what made your local area what it is today. To develop a sense of the effect of centuries of immigration, change and influx of new ideas and styles.

WHAT TO DO

Since this is an exercise in exploring your local area, what you do will depend on the young people, their interests and the nature of your area. But basically the idea is to use local resources – public records, newspapers, memories of local people, the buildings, architecture, layout – to find out more about what made your town the place it is today.

You will want to devise your own methods of working. You do not have to start with an ambitious project – in fact, better not to. Start with simple questions that might excite your interest. Examples could be:

- Why is that pub called the *Goat and Boot*? And that one the *Black Boy*?
- There is a significant Polish/Latvian/Asian/Chinese/Italian/African community here. When did they arrive and why?
- What is the town's crest? What characteristic of the area does it present? Is it still realistic? What would be a better one? (You could devise an up-to-date crest and emblem that portrays the ethnic diversity of your area.)
- What industries have there been in the area? What is there now?
- Have there been significant migrations from the area? Where to?
- What languages do the place names derive from? Why?

It may seem daunting to find answers to these kinds of

questions. Do not worry. All the information is available locally to help you. And there will be experts too who can guide and advise you.

Sources of information are bewildering in number – from census returns to local newspapers to parish registers. Use your library, local public record office, local Racial Equality Council, nostalgia bit of the local paper (there is usually one) and local history societies.

NOTES

The Public Record Office – you will have a local one somewhere in your area, ask at the library for details – is a mine of information. It collects archives from all manner of sources going back to the middle ages. But they are not always easy for a beginner to use. They have their own rules and protocols (you can write only in pencil for example, once inside the record office). And certainly they are not places to turn up unannounced for a familiarisation visit with a group of boisterous teenagers. So enquire in advance, try to work out your request in detail, and if possible enlist the help of someone who knows the ropes.

Be specific about what you want to know though. Do not make the mistake of inviting a local expert to meet young people – and then finding that they just deliver their usual long and illustrated lecture on their own hobby horse.

RESOURCES AND WHERE TO GO NEXT

- *Roots of the Future: ethnic diversity in the making of Britain* is the companion book to this pack. At only £9.95, with 144 pages and over 230 illustrations, printed in full colour throughout, this book develops and illustates the themes of this pack. Order direct from Central Books, 99 Wallis Road, London E9 5LN. Tel: 0181.986.5488. Fax: 0181.533.5821. ISBN 1854421794
- Also excellent is *Black and British* by David Bygott, published by Oxford University Press, available from good bookshops.
- *Blood, Sweat and Tears: a report of the Bede Anti-Racist Detached Youth Work Project,* by Stella Dadzie, is an account of a project working closely with young people who were potential or actual perpetrators of racial violence. It also contains training and discussion exercises. Available, price £8.50, from the National Youth Agency. ISBN 0 86155 171 0.
- *Beyond Steel Bands n' Samosas,* by Vipin Chauhan, is an excellent argument that the youth service can and should channel its energies into enabling Black young people to develop their own identities as individuals and as part of the wider Black community. Available on loan from the National Youth Agency library. Tel: 0116.285.6789.
- The National Youth Agency also has a reading list of resources called *Black in Britain*, as well as ones on anti-racist youth work, youth work with young Black people and anti-racist work with young white people. Contact the information officer on 0116.285.6789 for details.

Roots of the Future is a resource pack for everyone working with young people. It has been developed in close cooperation with the Commission for Racial Equality and, as well as a video, contains exercises, discussion starters and activities, all addressing the principal cause of racism – ignorance.

This pack is a positive pack. It invites young people and those who work with them to explore, celebrate and take pride in Britain's ethnic diversity. But its positiveness must never encourage us to forget the basic truth that underlies it. Namely that racism, in its different forms – from outright violence, murder and intimidation, to selective treatment on racial grounds – is a fact of life in Britain. Black and Asian people face a daily battle against racist acts, attitudes and policies. Their lives are overshadowed by one of the most damaging and far reaching evils in our society.

Work based on this pack, designed for use in small groups and in all sorts of settings, will challenge the ignorance sustaining that racism, by shedding new light on the society that young people in Britain grow up in, as well as on the recent past.

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